

Week 27, Lecture 76,¹ Introduction to Daniel's Final Vision. Daniel 10:1-3.

Literary Context. Daniel 10-12 is one literary unit. I will break it up into "manageable sections" for lecture purposes.

Introductory Remarks

Rabbi David Kline and I recently completed reading Daniel 1-12 (the Hebrew & Aramaic portions of the book).

Post Lecture note: We began reading Daniel on April 12, 2012, and finished Daniel 12 on January 12, 2017.

I found chapters 10-12 so complex that I made some study notes to help us keep track of what was going on.

These serve as the basis for this lecture.

Notes on the translation. The translation of the Hebrew is my own.

I would appreciate it if you notice any significant differences in other translations in the Q & A.

If a word required by English syntax is not required by Hebrew syntax, I place it *in italics*, as in the venerable KJV.

Neither in my translation, nor in the KJV, does italics mean **emphasis!**

AB Outline: The Final Revelation, 10:1 - 12:13²

I. The Prologue (10:1-11:1) Most commentaries & Bibles think that 11:1 belongs with chapter 10.

- A. Introduction (10:1)
- B. Daniel's Fast & Penance (10:2-3)
- C. Daniel's Vision (10:4-8)
- D. The Angel's Opening Address: An Angel's Mission (10:9-14)
- E. Daniel's Reaction & the Angel's Response: An Angel's Message (10:15-11:1)

II. The Revelation of the Future (11:2-12:4)

- A. Persian age (11:2).
- B. Alexander the Great (336–323 B.C.) and the breakup of his empire (11:3–4).
- C. The battles and fortunes of the earlier Seleucids and Ptolemies (11:5–20).
 1. Ptolemy I Soter (323–285) and Seleucus I Nicator (312/11–280) (11:5).
 2. Intrigues of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–246) and Antiochus II Theos (261–246) (11:6).
 3. Revenge of Ptolemy III Euergetes (246–221) for the death of his sister Berenice; his overrunning the kingdom of Seleucus II Callinicus (246–226) (11:7–9).
 4. Long and eventful reign of Antiochus III the Great (223–187) (11:10–19).
 5. Seleucus IV Philopator (187–175) (11:20).
- D. Infamous reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164) and his bitter persecution of the Jews (11:21–45).
- E. Final victory of God's chosen ones (12:1–4).

III. The Epilogue (12:5-13)

Introduction (10:1) My Translation

¹ In the third year of Cyrus, King of Persia,
a word/matter was revealed to Daniel, whose name is called Belshazzar ;
and the word/matter was true, and a great army.
And he understood the word/matter, and he had understanding in the vision.

1. Third year of Cyrus, This would be 536 BCE, according to *The Jewish Study Bible*.

word/matter. Hebrew *dabar* can mean either.³

¹ Lectures are numbered consecutively. Although this is this week's first lecture, its number reflects its place in the **total** sequence.

² Louis F. Hartman and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, vol. 23, AB, 286–287.

³ When a Hebrew *beth*, b is preceded by a vowel, it is pronounced as a "v." So the word is often spelled *davar*. With either spelling, the pronunciation is the same.

"and a great army"

The Anchor Bible reads: "It concerned much warfare." Then gives the following information:

This is merely an attempt to give some sense, in the context, to the **obscure and possibly corrupt Hebrew** of the MT, *w^ešābā' gādōl*, literally, "and a great army," or possibly "and great service" (or "labor") . . .⁴

Final observation on verse 1. This verse is written in the 3rd person. An anonymous narrator tells us about Daniel.

Daniel's Fast & Penance (10:2-3), Translation

² In those days, I Daniel, was mourning for three weeks, days.

³ Bread-of desired-things I did not eat, and meat and wine did not go into my mouth, and anointing I did not anoint myself for three weeks, days.

2. "I Daniel." The narrative changes to 1st person.⁵ Daniel himself is speaking!

Often such changes reveal the activity of a later editor. Perhaps v. 1 was written by such a person.

"for three weeks, days."

Most translations just ignore the word "days" or translate "three full weeks." Best note is from the NET.

The inclusion of "days" here and in v. 3 is perhaps intended to call attention to the fact that these weeks are very different in nature from those of chap. 9, which are "weeks of years." (NET Bible Note)

Post-Lecture Note. I will comment on "desired-things" in the next lecture."

3. "did not anoint myself." I think the modern equivalent would be "I did not bathe."

Fasting (remarks from Collins)

Ascetic practices were becoming more common after the exile. Strict fasting can induce an altered mental state. Collins thinks the author of Daniel was familiar with the ascetic practices, and may have participated himself.

Week 27, Lecture 77.⁶ Daniel's Vision, Daniel 10:4-8.

My Translation (10:4-8)

⁴ and on day **twenty-four** of the first month, [I mistranslated -- see note below]
and I was beside the Great River; it was the Tigris

⁵ and I lifted up my eyes, and I saw, and behold! one man
clothed with linen,
and his loins girt with gold and pure-gold.

⁶ and his body was like Tarshish-stone,
and his face like the appearance of lightning
and his eyes like torches of fire,
and his arms and the place of his **feet like [the] eye of polished bronze**
and the sound of his voice like the sound of a multitude

⁷ And I saw – I Daniel alone! – the vision,
and the men who were with me did not see the vision,
but-rather a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled for-to-hide themselves.

⁸ And I was left by-myself, and I looked, and I saw this great sight,
and there was no strength left in me,
and my vigor was changed on me into corruption,
and I retained no strength.

⁴ Hartman and Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, 262.

⁵ Grammar review: **first** person = I / We; **second** person = you / y'all (in the South); **third** person = he, she, it / they.

⁶ Originally my plan was to cover Daniel 10:4-14 in one lecture, but it went long, so I divided it into two lectures, 4-8 and 9-14.

Fasting on Passover. Verse 4. "day 14 of the first month." The 1st month is Nisan; the 14th day is Passover. Daniel appears to be fasting on Passover! He never stresses this point. But no Jew could read "day 14 of the 1st month" and not think: "Passover!"

Post-Lecture Correction.

I originally mistranslated "twenty-four" (literally "twenty and four") as "fourteen" (literally, "ten and four") and said that Daniel was fasting on Passover. In my defense, in Hebrew "twenty" is literally "tens," so the dumb mistake is easier to make in Hebrew than in English! (עשרים vs. עשר) Anyway, my conclusion was right, even if my math was wrong. According to DiLella and Hartmann, if we assume that the day 24 marks the end of Daniel's 21-day / 3-week fast, that would mean that he had been fasting during Passover.⁷

bank of the great river. Daniel twice has vision by a river (cf. 8:2)⁸

"it was the Tigris." Usually "the Great River" is the Euphrates. Hartmann & Di Lella (AB) regards this as a gloss. In 8:2, Daniel had been in Susa, which is closer to the Tigris. Perhaps a scribe trying to "help out" added the gloss.

5. "and pure gold." Many translations: "gold of Uphaz."

If Uphaz is a place, its location is unknown. This is the only time it occurs in the Hebrew OT.

With the AB, I read וּפָז *ûpaz* "and *paz*" [pure gold], a phrase that also occurs in the Song of Solomon, 5:11.

The MT has וּפָז *'ûpaz*.⁹ [Read the note for the "difference" between *uphaz* and *upaz*.]

According to the AB, the **א**, *aleph*, of the MT possibly comes from a the variant found in a few manuscripts, "gold of Ophir" (אֹפִיר) borrowed from Jer 10:9.

I think it might be just a spelling mistake. Usually the *aleph* is a "silent" letter.

Two Kinds of Scribal Errors:

1) Some letters **look** alike: e.g.,

D & R ד & ר Y & W י & ו

Scribes make these kinds of errors when they are **looking at** the manuscript they are copying.

2) Some letters **sound** alike. Scribes make these kinds of errors when they are copying **from dictation**.

"Dictation" is the ancient equivalent of the Xerox machine!

Bottom Line: the belt is probably made from two different types of gold, rather than gold from some exotic place.

6. like [the] eye of polished bronze

AB. The same Hebrew phrase . . . occurs in Ezek 1:7, whence no doubt our writer borrowed it.

There, Ezekiel is describing the "four living creatures" who worship at God's throne

And this was their appearance: they had the form of men, ⁶ but each had four faces, and each of them had four wings. ⁷ Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf's foot; and they sparkled like burnished bronze. (Ezek 1:5b-7, RSV)

Just as in chapter 9, our author was making use of Jeremiah, so here he is making use of Ezekiel.

This is evidence that these two prophets were beginning to be considered as "scripture."

7. Daniel alone sees the vision! His companions see nothing.

Compare the stories of Paul's encounter with the risen Christ in Acts 9, Acts 22, & Acts 26.

⁷ Hartman & Di Lella, *Daniel*, 279.

⁸ Note from *The Jewish Study Bible*, Oxford Press.

⁹ In Hebrew, if "p" is preceded by a vowel, it is pronounced as "ph." The letter "h" in the English spelling "Uphaz" does not represent a Hebrew letter.

In one version, only Paul sees the heavenly "light." The others only hear a voice.

In another version, all see the heavenly "light," but only Paul hears the voice.

I think the point of all of this is that the heavenly revelation is for a **designated** recipient.

For a modern example, consider the accounts of the visionaries at Medjugorje.

7. "for-to" The normal word for "to" is **le**; but what is written is **be**. I try to capture that this phrase sounds "strange".
The following comment was originally made after the comments on verse 14, but it belongs here.

10:5, His Eyes were like Torches of Fire

This line is borrowed by the author of the Book of Revelation (1:14; 2:18; 19:12)

My favorite Jesus movie, *Pale Rider*, starring Clint Eastwood, makes dramatic use of this line.

In this film Clint is a "Jesus figure."

Not the "Good Shepherd," but the Messiah who has come to kick-butt and take names!

The lecture went a bit long, so I decided to divide it here.

Week 27, Lecture 78.¹⁰ The Mission of an Angel, Daniel 10:9-14.

My Translation (10:9-14)

⁹ and I heard the sound of his words, and as I was hearing the sound of his words, and I was sleeping upon my face, and my face was toward the ground. ¹⁰ And behold! a hand touched me, and shook me upon my knees and the palms of my hands. ¹¹ And he said to me, "Daniel, man of loveableness, understand with the words I am about to say to you, and stand on your standing-place for now I have been sent to you," and as he spoke to me this word, I stood trembling. ¹² And he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day on which you gave your heart to understand, and to afflict yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come at your words. ¹³ But the Prince of the Kingdom of Persia was opposing me for twenty-one days, and behold! Michael, one of the chief princes came to help me, and I was left there, in the presence of the kings of Persia. ¹⁴ And I came to make you understand what will happen to your people at the end of days, for still a vision for days.

10. "and shook me upon my knees . . ." Most translations make this gibberish sensible.
My favorite note is from *The Jewish Study Bible*: Meaning of Heb. uncertain.

11. Man of "loveableness"

The word is fairly rare.¹¹ It is the same as word that I translated as "desired-things" in 10:3.

13. **The Prince of the kingdom of Persia.** This is an angelic being.

The idea is that each nation has its "guardian angel." (If the nation is your enemy, "guardian demon.")

In Apocalyptic thought, earthly struggles merely reflect the **real battles** that are taking place in heaven.

The **real** battle is between the guardian angel of Persia and the guardian angel of Israel, and their allies.

Opposition! The scriptures often paint a benign portrait of Persian rule.

Cyrus was the one who let the Jews return from exile. Second Isaiah calls him "the LORD's Anointed."

Persian rule was far more tolerant than the rule of the Greeks who would follow them.

Ezra and Nehemiah have kind words for later Persian rulers.

However, Daniel departs from this "majority opinion," with his depiction of angelic hostility.

Reason for 3-week delay. Angels travel **fast!** He started as soon as the prayer was said.

But the Persian angelic prince opposed him for 3 weeks! **Fortunately, Michael came to help him!**

¹⁰ Originally my plan was to cover Daniel 10:4-14 in one lecture, but it went long, so I divided it into two lectures, 4-8 and 9-14.

¹¹ The word *hamudot* appears 9 times in the OT, 6 of them in Daniel.

13. **"and I was left."** Note from Hartman & Di Lella: **"and he was left"**

[The meaning of the Hebrew] is obvious nonsense, since the *angelus revelator* [revealing angel] did **not** stay with the prince of the kingdom of Persia, but with Michael's aid, succeeded in coming to Daniel. On the basis of [the Greek translations] most modern versions correct the Hebrew text to read . . . **"and I left him."**

However, . . . the Greek translators were probably merely giving a free rendition of the passage in order to make sense out of it . . . Ginsberg (p. 60) suggests that the Hebrew translator misread (or had before him a corrupt text that read) in Aramaic, . . . **"and I was left,"** in place of the **original** . . . **"and this one [the latter] was left."** The same misreading of **nh** for an original **dnh** [only one letter difference, PJM] probably occurs also in 10:20.¹²

"the kings of Persia." Probably **the Prince of the kingdom of Persia."**

It is not obvious why the angelic messenger was hanging around with Persian kings.

Both Greek translations and the Syriac insert **"the Prince of."**

Instead of "kings" one of the Qumran manuscripts, 2 other manuscripts, and one Greek version read **"kingdom"**.

This also makes it agree with what was written in verse 13.

So, if Hartman & Di Lella are correct, verse 13 should read:

Michael, one of the chief princes came to help me, and **he** was left there, in the presence of **the Prince of the kingdom of Persia**.

NOT, what the (corrupt?) Hebrew text says:

Michael, one of the chief princes came to help me, and **I** was left there, in the presence of **the kings of Persia**.

14. **"for still a vision for days."**

I purposely did a literal translation, which will explain the variety to translations in Bibles trying to make sense of it.

I like the NABRE best. **for there is yet a vision concerning those days."**

If I had been the NABRE translator, I would have rendered it: **for there is yet a vision concerning [those] days."**

This can be justified because:

The word "is" must often be understood when translating Hebrew. English needs it; Hebrew does not.

"There" is often a "throw-away word" in English. It does not designate a location.

"A glass is on the table." "There is a glass on the table."

[Those] is not in the Hebrew. It would have been nice if the author had written it.

I leave out enough words in my own notes that I cannot fuss to much about it.

14. OR **". . . for the appointed time?"**

Variant Text. "For the vision is for **an appointed time,**" replacing **"days"** with **"an appointed time."**

Some Bibles make it smoother by translating a different word. This note is from the Anchor Bible.

a few Hebrew MSS have *lēmō'ed* ["regarding **an appointed period**" PJM] (better vocalized as *lāmmō'ed*, as in 11:35), "regarding **the appointed period,**" thus keeping closer to wording of Hab 2:3, ["For the vision is for the **appointed time,**" PJM] from which the present passage is borrowed.¹³

Week 27, Lecture 79. The Message of an Angel, Daniel 10:15-21

My Translation (10:15-11:1)

¹⁵ And when he spoke to me such words as these, I gave my face earthward and became mute. ¹⁶ And behold! like an image of **a child of Adam**, touching upon my lips, and I opened my mouth, and I spoke, and I said unto the one standing before me, "My lord, by the vision, my pangs were turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. ¹⁷ and how is the servant of this my lord able to speak with this my lord? And I -- from this-moment, there exists no strength in me, and no breath is left in me. ¹⁸ And the one like a vision of Adam touched me again and he strengthened me. ¹⁹ And he said, "Do not fear, man of **loveableness**; Peace to you. Be strong and be strong!" And when he spoke to me, I regained strength, and I said, "Let my lord speak, for he has strengthened me." ²⁰ And he said, "Do you know why I came unto you? And now I must return to fight against **the Prince of Persia**. And **I** will depart, and behold! **The Prince of Greece comes.**" ²¹ But I will tell you what is inscribed in the

¹² Hartman and Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, 264–265.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 265.

Book of Truth, and there is not a one who fights beside me against this one except Michael, your prince. 11:1 And I [the angel], in the first year of Darius the Mede, stood to strengthen him and as a support for him.

A child of Adam. More literally, "a son of Adam." Here is the NET Bible Note

16. Human being. So most Hebrew MSS; one Hebrew MS along with the Dead Sea Scrolls and LXX read "something that looked like a man's hand."

This would make this story closer to the folk-tale of "The Handwriting on the Wall" of Daniel 5.

16. Touching my lips. This is an allusion to the call of Isaiah.
One of the seraphim touch his lips with a burning coal to purify them (Isa 6:5-7).

18. Man of "Loveableness." See remarks in previous lecture.

20. I will depart. The Hebrew says "I will depart." But here is an AB note.

the Hebrew translator misread . . . Aramaic ܕܢܗ *dnh* (= "he, that-guy") for ܕܢܗ ܐܢܝ ܐܝܢܝ (*nh* (I) for original .

Post-lecture correction. I misread, and got the previous line turned around.

The original Aramaic was *dnh* ("he"), but that original text was misread by the Hebrew translator as *'nh* ("I").

That is, it should say, "**he (i.e., the Prince of Persia)** will depart."

That is, after the Prince of Persia leaves, the **Prince of Greece** will come. (more on this in the next note)

In other words, if you think Israel has problems now, just wait for the next band of rulers!

20. Note from *The Jewish Study Bible*

Prince of Greece, the guardian angel of the Seleucid empire.

This is in keeping with the notion of "national guardian angels"

Compare our Catholic custom of assigning "**Patron Saints**" to various countries!

Think of "Our Lady Help of Christians!" (aftermath of the Battle of Lepanto)

Think of the Louisiana devotion to "Our Lady of Prompt Succor" [= "quick help"]

(from French, Notre Dame de Prompt Secours)

11:1. "I . . . supported Darius"

NET Bible Note

The antecedent of the pronoun "I" is the angel, not Daniel. The traditional chapter division at this point, and the presence of a chronological note in the verse similar to ones used elsewhere in the book to position Daniel's activities in relation to imperial affairs, sometimes lead to confusion on this matter.

That is, if you just open your Bible, and start reading chapter 11, you will think that "I" means "Daniel!"

Note from *The Jewish Study Bible*

First year of Darius the Mede. A Persian, and not a Mede.

Daniel's "history" is more accurate when he is describing events of the 2nd century B.C.

than when he is writing about the 5th or 6th century B.C.

11:1, To Strengthen Him. A Positive view of the Medes & Persians.

This is more "normal" in the Bible than the earlier portrayal of opposition between this angel & the "prince of Persia."